

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

Boise, Idaho

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News

A few new tokens have surfaced in the last few months, but I have not had a chance to put together a list for you. Just some leaders: Mike Fritz now has Deaton's Billiard Parlor from Bancroft, Dean Rasmussen got a new Rexburg piece, Thomas George. He also has a token from Rearie, Idaho, but before you head for the gazetteer looking for that town, it looks like a creative way to spell Ririe. Dan Lute was able to snag a token from Kelly's Hot Springs—he and I will put together an article on this piece for next time.

More on towns

Dick Magnuson, Lloyd Libert and Mike Fritz all suggested we use the term "place" or "location" when describing a token's home. That makes good sense as the use of "town" implies an incorporated municipality, usually with a post office. If the token states a place on it, I will usually assume that the issuing business knew what it was doing. Mavericks will still be somewhat of a judgement call as we piece together the past to find the most logical attribution for a token. That's what history is all about!

As an aside, I subscribe to several mailing lists from the Internet, among them the Coins list. Recently a discussion arose about the use of the term "exonomia" as coined by Russell Rulau, author of several token books. His implication was that tokens, etc. were not truly within the realm of numismatics; my Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines exonomia as "numismatic items (as tokens, medals, or scrip) other than coins and paper money." On the other hand, numismatics is defined as "the study or collection of coins, tokens, and paper money and sometimes related objects [as medals]." I propose junking the term "exonomia" and its derivatives. What we are doing is science and history and should be called by its right name: Numismatics.

Robert Higdem

Robert started collecting coins some 20 years ago in Coeur d'Alene, where he was a member of the Coin Club. After Coeur d'Alene High School, he was in the U. S. Coast Guard, and then came to Boise to continue his education at Boise State University. He joined the Southern Idaho Coin Club, and has served as its President and Bourse Chairman. In about 1990 he put together a collection of Love Tokens, and made a great display with it at several coin shows. He found himself glazing over coins at shows and cherry picking tokens. He purchased two lots of Idaho tokens from different dealers; they both turned out to be from the collection of John Gold, and will be the basis for his collection. Robert lives in Meridian and is a TAMS, SICC, and Love Token Society member.

Coincidence...or destiny?

I was playing around with my computer mapping program the other day, while thinking about a possible get-together for Idaho token collectors. Using the old physics calculation for center of gravity, I located where each of us lives and calculated the central location from a purely mathematical standpoint. It came out to be Idaho City, the home of the oldest known Idaho token. That, of course, is the Miners Brewery and Bakery piece which is dated 1865. Some would argue that the Silver City, Idaho Territory piece is older, but it is not; it "only" has the distinction of being the only known token stating it is from Idaho Territory (pre 1890).

The first reference I find in the token literature to the Idaho City token is in the November - December, 1962 **TAMS Journal** where Russell Rulau reported that Robert J. Lindesmith of Dayton, WA had found a token from the WINERY (sic) BREWERY AND BAKERY / IDAHO CITY / 1865. Rulau headlined the piece "NEW IDAHO CIVIL WAR TOKEN?".

In the March - April, 1966 issue, Herman M. Aqua reported that another specimen had been found, included a photograph, and corrected the name from WINERY to MINERS. Phillip W. Whiteley followed up in the May - July, 1966 issue stating that the token is not ha Civil War token and is not from Idaho. He owned one and stated that Idaho Springs, Colorado, went by a number of names in its early days, among them being Idaho City, and that Colorado was the proper home for the token.

Lindesmith responded with a two-page article in the August - October, 1966 number, quoting a Miner's Brewery and Bakery advertisement from the **Idaho World** of January 21, 1865. He further cited the May 20, 1865 **Idaho World** report of the great Idaho City fire in which Knauer & Co. lost the Miners Brewery, valued at \$15,000. He also opined that any token dated 1865 known to have circulated then should be called a Civil War token. The jury is still out on the Civil War issue—I think it is fair that we claim it to be the only known Idaho Civil War token. But there has been no further "possession" claim from the Coloradans, so it is safe to conclude the token is from Idaho City, Idaho.

My research leads me to believe that these tokens were ordered early in 1865 as there is an April, 1865 **Idaho World** ad for the "recently enlarged, refitted, and reopened" Miners Brewery and Bakery. The tokens may not yet have been placed into circulation when the great fire of May, 1865 destroyed essentially all of Idaho City. Most of the tokens are dark and pitted, an indication of such damage. F. and Lewis Knauer sold the business to Fischer & Meydenbauer in September, 1866. This token is not uncommon—I know of about 15—however it is one of the most desirable Idaho tokens. Here is an illustration of my IC-1. Even though it shows signs of its age and possible status as witness (victim?) of the fire, it is a great artifact from the "Queen of the Gold Camps".



Logging History

You may be interested to know of a new Idaho history book, *White Pine: Wobblies and Wannigans, A History of Potlatch Logging Camps* by Tom Farbo. (First Edition, ©1996, LCCN 96-096882). I just finished reading it and think many of you would enjoy it also. This 8½ x 11" format "laminated soft cover" book is available for \$33.95 postpaid from Tom Farbo, P. O. Box 1297, Orofino, ID 83544, who would probably be happy to autograph a copy for you.

The book was obviously a labor of love for the author; it is a description of most, if not all, of the logging camps (185 of them!) used by Potlatch Lumber Company and its successors from 1903 to 1986. Included are maps, over 400 photographs (mostly from private collections), personal recollections and accounts which give the reader a lot of appreciation for the logger's life in early Idaho.

Several years ago a number of tickets came on the market from the Washington, Idaho, and Montana Railway. The W. I. & M. was owned by the Potlatch Lumber Company and hauled logs to the mill at Potlatch. The tickets were for passengers riding between the region's towns and camps. My collection contains Princeton to Palouse, WA, Princeton to Cornell, Princeton to Helmer, Princeton to Summit Siding, Potlatch to Cornell, and Harvard to Cornell. There appears to be two series with different General Manager signatures. Do any of you have others? I'll list them in a future newsletter.

Other related pieces of history are the paychecks issued to Potlatch workers. "Sets" of checks for workers in 13 different camps in 1913 were sold by Tom Hitt, an Ohio token dealer. And, of course, the tokens from the Potlatch Mercantile Company in Potlatch..

And speaking of books...

Arthur Hart, Director Emeritus of the Idaho Historical Society, is supplementing his retirement income by researching and writing popular history books. His [Camera Eye on Idaho, Pioneer Photography, 1863-1913](#) is one I have enjoyed looking through. Included is a listing of all known professional photographers to have worked in Idaho through 1913. The local Borders bookstore is closing out this 200-page 8½ by 11 Caxton Printers book at \$5.20 (with tax), a bargain from the original \$26. Let me know if you want me to get a copy for you. Hart lives just a block from me, there's a chance it could be autographed.

Protect your collectibles!

Hopefully you all are aware of the dangers of using non-archival storage materials for your collections. The worst offenders are made of vinyl which can react with ink and copier toner to leave a sticky mess and deposit gunk on metallic surfaces over time. Most tokens have experienced some pretty rough conditions, and storing them in mylar 2x2s is great for them. But remember your paper collectibles: postcards, stock certificates, sports cards, photographs, etc. A neat way to store them is in archival polypropylene pages made for a 3-ring binder. (Yeah, almost all my binders are vinyl, but its not against the collectible.) Many office supply stores and mail-order catalogs carry an assortment of sizes, made just for this purpose. If you are interested, I am going to place an order soon

to Light Impressions, a mail order outfit I have used for some time, and can include your needs to lower the overall cost. These pages come 25 per package, and the cost per is \$8 plus postage. It drops to \$6.75 if 9 or more packages are ordered at one time.

Idaho Mavericks and Questionables

Here is the first installment of a list of mavericks for which I have been unable to make a definite attribution, but which have long been held to be Idaho. Frank Schell did not "hand down" the sources for any attributions to me, and there have been others attributed to Idaho through the token collecting organizations without documentation. If you can shed any light on them, (i.e. a directory listing, proprietor name, date, etc.) please let me know.

SPARKS - a maverick supposedly related to the American Falls Sparks Meat Co. Ingles
B. ZEMO - AMF-32
ASHTON CIGAR STORE - ASH-12
GILLS BILLIARD PARLOR - ASH-9
BLISS BUFFET - BLI-5

An old problem for collectors is the maverick which says "Town Name" and "Business Type" as represented by the Ashton Cigar Store and Bliss Buffet in the list. Without some extra evidence, these type of mavericks often can be attributed to multiple states. My 1913 Postal Guide lists towns named Ashton in 17 states and Bliss in 9. If the tokens were originally found in the town, that helps, but is not conclusive. Even a directory listing is not really the final answer in many cases, as one of a businessman's prime candidates for a business name is one of this format. I'll bet that at least half of the Ashtons in the country had an Ashton Cigar Store at one time. If you can, read Norman Peterson's article on maverick reasonableness in the February, 1997 NATCA publication, Talkin' Tokens.

Get out your magnifiers!

Robert Higdem let me borrow his collection recently to inventory. As I was going through making sure each piece was correctly listed, I realized that he and I each have a "new" variety from the all-time record holder for Idaho varieties, the Bouquet Cigar Store. Certainly not all Idaho collectors will get too excited over this news, but there are a lot of stories if only the tokens could tell them!

This variety is BO-7(AU), the 45th known type. Its obverse is the same as BO-7(D) and BO-7(AS): BOQUET / --- / 5 B ¢ / MAIN ST. Note the incorrect spelling and the dash-dot-dash ornament. Under close examination, the Q was stamped over an N. The three reverse varieties do not have the Q/N overstamp and are as follows

BO-7(D): BOQUET / --- / 5 B ¢ / MAIN, ST. (The ¢ is level with the center of the B)
BO-7(AS): BOQUET / 5 B ¢ / MAIN, ST. (No dash-dot-dash ornament)
BO-7(AU): BOQUET / --- / 5 B ¢ / MAIN, ST. (The ¢ is level with the upper loop of the B and the 5 is doubled)



Common Obverse

BO-7(D) Reverse

BO-7(AS) Reverse

BO-7(AU) Reverse

The questions these tokens bring up will probably always remain unanswered. Whose error was the misspelling of Bouquet? Were these varieties produced at the same time? I can imagine that a pair of obverse and reverse dies were made, a number of tokens produced, and then the reverse die failed. A second reverse die was made roughly copying the first, and more tokens were struck. Then that reverse die failed and a third was made to complete the order. But I cannot figure why the diemaker would copy the comma after Main onto a second and third die, unless, as Robert Higdem pointed out, the diemaker was used to putting a comma at this spot which was usually between a town and state name.

I have not done much research into the records of this business. The Bouquet was still in operation at 821 Main Street when I moved back to Boise in 1971. I remember going into the Bouquet in the summer of 1972. It was in the middle of a block of run-down bars and pawn shops. Urban renewal had been promised (threatened?) for this part of Boise, so little had been done for years to keep up the businesses. Inside was a long, ornate bar on the right, with a cash register and tobacco counter near the front window. On the left were two pool tables in front and a number of card tables to the back. Farther back was a lunch counter on the right and a few tables on the left. In the far back were the kitchen on the right and the restrooms on the left. An exit door opened to the alley in the rear.

Tokens were still in use for the pool tables and card games, so I purchased \$2.00 worth and went back to the bar where I had a 25¢ "short beer" and watched a game. That was one of my only "real life" experiences with tokens! Within a couple of years Boise joined the Urban Renewal bandwagon, and most of the buildings along the south side of Main Street were torn down. The 900 block was one of the first to go so the 14-story One Capitol Center building could be constructed. When it opened, Mountain Bell and the J. R. Simplot Company were early tenants. My office was on the east side of the building, four floors up, and a ringside seat to watch the destruction of the 800 block of Main Street.

Most of the demolition was accomplished with a crane swinging a wrecking ball, but the Bouquet was partly exempted from this fate. Al Berro, the owner at the time, seemed to be fighting the Boise Redevelopment Agency. He had negotiated a move of his business to

1010 Main Street which took a long time to remodel. There was a large amount of hand-crafted woodwork in the new location, and they moved the backbar from its original location. When they moved the backbar, they filled two gallon pickle jars with tokens from behind it. I understood the practice was for bartenders to accept "foreign" tokens, but toss them behind the backbar to get them out of circulation. Jim Berro, Al's son who was in charge of the new Bouquet, let me look through this hoard. It turned out to have mostly Bouquet tokens in it, plus perhaps 200 other Idaho tokens and 100 or so others from other states. They made a framed display of the Idaho tokens which hung in the new Bouquet until it was stolen in a break-in several years later.

After the Bouquet moved out of 821 Main, a crew of 4 or 5 clowns started dismantling the building a brick at a time. I say clowns because they put on a show equaling a Marx Brothers vs. the Three Stooges comedy. The building was two stories high, the upper floor being the Havana Club. The workers wanted to salvage the bricks, but they found that many were broken by being dropped into a pile on the ground. They located a mattress and tossed the bricks onto it, but that only worked for a short time. Then they built a chute to slide the bricks down, but many still broke as they hit bottom. The next step was to employ an ironing board at the outlet of the chute, but they lost a lot of time climbing down to adjust the way the ironing board slowed the brick velocity. Their lost time was nothing, though, compared to the businesses in the offices across the street where all the workers were watching and cheering when a brick made it all the way down in one piece!

Best,

John D. Mutch
7931 Crestwood Drive
Boise, ID 83704-3022